

## Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 BANGKO 20942 031045Z

14

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S E C R E T BANGKOK 20942

E.O. 11652: XGDS-2

TAGS: PINS, TH

SUBJ: THE INSURGENCY IN THAILAND--CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS

1. RECENT LARGE-SCALE MILITARY ATTACKS BY INSURGENT FORCES ON ROYAL THAI GOVERNMENT (RTG) REGULAR-FORCE PERSONNEL AND INSTALLATIONS HAVE TENDED TO FOCUS INCREASED INTERNATIONAL AND NATIONAL ATTENTION ON THE THAI INSURGENCY. THIS TELEGRAM, TO BE FOLLOWED BY A MORE DETAILED ASSESSMENT IN AIRGRAM FORMAT, IS FOR THE PURPOSE OF PLACING CURRENT INSURGENCY DEVELOPMENTS IN SHARPER FOCUS.

2. AN ANALYSIS OF AVAILABLE INFORMATION ON THE INSURGENCY FROM THE INTERNAL SECURITY OPERATIONS COMMAND (ISOC) REVEALS THAT THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF THAILAND (CPT) HAS SOME DEGREE OF INFLUENCE OVER ALMOST FOUR MILLION PEOPLE IN THAILAND. THE CPT CONTINUES TO PURSUE A PROTRACTED STRUGGLE WITH ARMED REBELLION AND REVOLUTIONARY VIOLENCE AS THE CRITICAL INGREDIENTS TO THE SEIZURE OF STATE POWER, AND HAS COMPLETELY REJECTED PARLIAMENTARY MEANS OF STRUGGLE. RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN THE INDO-CHINA STATES HAVE AS YET HAD LITTLE, IF ANY, EFFECT ON THE MAOIST-INFLUENCED THAI INSURGENCY.

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 BANGKO 20942 031045Z

3. ARMED COMMUNIST JUNGLE SOLDIERS ARE ESTIMATED TO NUMBER AT

LEAST 8,400 WITH AS MANY AS 84,000 ACTIVE SUPPORTERS. THE JUNGLE SOLDIERS ARE WELL ARMED, PARTICULARLY IN THE NORTH AND NORTHEAST WITH EVIDENCE OF CONTINUING EFFORTS TO UPGRADE UNIT AND INDIVIDUAL WEAPONS. COMMUNIST EXTERNAL SUPPORT SEEMS TO KEEP THE INSURGENTS WELL SUPPLIED WITH WEAPONS AND AMMUNITION, AND IN-COUNTRY RECRUITING MAKES UP FOR COMBAT AND DEFECTION LOSSES AND ENABLES THE SLOW BUT STEADY EXPANSION OF THE JUNGLE FORCE.

4. STILL CONFINED TO TRADITIONAL OPERATING AREAS IN THE NORTH, NORTHEAST, WEST CENTRAL AND SOUTH REGIONS, THE CPT IS ENGAGED IN SIGNIFICANT EXPANSION WORK IN SOME AREAS WITH POLITICAL INCIDENTS NOW OCCURRING MUCH MORE FREQUENTLY THAN MILITARY INCIDENTS. CPT POLITICAL AND MILITARY EXPANSION EFFORTS ARE MEETING WITH VERY LIMITED SUCCESS AT PRESENT, BUT COUPLED WITH MILITARY OPERATIONS IN WHICH NUMERICALLY SUPERIOR INSURGENT UNITS ATTACK AND OVERRUN MILITARY, POLICE AND OTHER "HARD" TARGET INSTALLATIONS, RESULTING IN A REDUCTION OF RTG CONTROL IN SOME AREAS, THESE EFFORTS MAY BEGIN TO BRING MORE TERRITORY AND PEOPLE UNDER CT CONTROL.

5. THE CURRENT TREND IN INSURGENT ACTIVITIES INDICATES THAT THE CPT MAY NOW HAVE DEVELOPED TO THE POINT WHERE A CONTINUING LIMITED OFFENSIVE PHASE MAY BE INITIATED WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE STRATEGIC DEFENSIVE STAGE OF REVOLUTIONARY WARFARE.

6. STUDENTS IN THE NORTH, NORTHEAST AND SOUTH ARE COOPERATING WITH THE CPT, AND HAVE ASSISTED THE CPT IN SOME PRELIMINARY EXPANSION WORK AND IN UNITED FRONT ACTIVITIES. THE FARMERS, THE MAIN CPT TARGET GROUP, HAVE NOT YET ACCEPTED THE CPT AS AN ALLY IN THEIR CONFLICTS WITH THE RTG WITH NOTABLE EXCEPTIONS IN SOME DISTRICTS IN PROVINCES OF THE SOUTH AND NORTHEAST, BUT THE CPT IS EXPECTED TO CONTINUE ITS EFFORTS TO WIN THE FARMERS' LOYALTY.

7. ALTHOUGH AWARE THAT THE CPT DIRECTED INSURGENCY IS THE PRINCIPAL LONG-RANGE SECURITY THREAT TO THAILAND TODAY, THE RTG HAS NOT DEVELOPED A COMPREHENSIVE NATIONAL PLAN TO COUNTER THE INSURGENCY, AND COUNTER-INSURGENCY IS STILL WELL DOWN ON THEIR LIST OF PRIORITIES.

8. THE ROYAL THAI ARMY AND POLICE CONTINUE TO EMPLOY APPROXIMATELY 20,000 TO 25,000 MEN OUT OF A TOTAL AVAILABLE FORCE OF  
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 BANGKO 20942 031045Z

OVER 200,000 IN SOME FORM OF COUNTER-INSURGENCY OPERATIONS, INCLUDING COMMAND AND CONTROL AND SUPPORT FUNCTIONS. THE SECOND ARMY IN THE NORTHEAST CONTINUES TO SHOW THE MOST SUCCESS WITH ITS ACTIVE PATROLLING AND SMALL UNIT OPERATIONS, AND HAS ASSISTED IN TRAINING AND SUPPORTING 25,000 VOLUNTEERS FOR VILLAGE DEFENSE. ON THE OTHER END OF THE SCALE, RTA OPERATIONS IN THE SOUTH HAVE BEEN AT A VIRTUAL STANDSTILL FOR MONTHS. THE POLICE CONTINUE TO PLAY ONLY A VERY LIMITED AND INEFFECTIVE ROLE IN COUNTER-INSURGENCY OPERATIONS, WITH

ONLY THE BORDER PATROL POLICE (BPP) AND LIMITED ELEMENTS OF THE PROVINCIAL POLICE ASSIGNED COUNTER-INSURGENCY RESPONSIBILITIES; RECENT CT ATTACKS AGAINST BPP REMOTE INSTALLATIONS HAVE FOUND THEM EASY TARGETS.

9. STATISTICALLY, MILITARY INCIDENTS ARE DOWN SOME FORTY PERCENT FROM LAST YEAR, BUT RTG CASUALTIES HAVE INCREASED ABOUT 15 PERCENT AND INSURGENT LOSSES (MAINLY DEFECTIONS) HAVE DECREASED AS MUCH AS THIRTY PERCENT. CONCLUSIONS DRAWN FROM THESE STATISTICS INDICATE SELECTIVE CT TARGETTING ON RTG INSTALLATIONS AND PERSONNEL, AND LARGE-SCALE, HIGH INTENSITY ATTACKS ON UNDERMANNED OUTPOSTS, AND THE SLOWING DEFECTION RATE MAY RESULT FROM INCREASING INSURGENT CONFIDENCE IN THE VIABILITY OF THE MOVEMENT.

10. THE PROGNOSIS IS FOR THE CPT, NOT YET A MAJOR SHORT-RANGE THREAT TO THE RTG, TO CONTINUE ITS GROWTH WITH ACCELERATED EXTERNAL SUPPORT AND AN INTENSIFICATION OF THE INSURGENCY, UNLESS THE RTG UNDERTAKES A MASSIVE, COORDINATED COUNTER-INSURGENCY EFFORT; AND THERE IS NO EVIDENCE AT HAND TO INDICATE THE RTG PLANS TO UNDERTAKE SUCH AN EFFORT.

11. THERE HAS BEEN NO QUANTUM JUMP IN TERMS OF INCREASED CPT ARMED STRENGTH AND CPT EXPANSION OF INFLUENCE AND CONTROL OVER TERRITORY AND POPULATION. THE CPT HAS BEEN WIDENING ITS SPAN OF CONTROL OVER REMOTE RURAL AREAS CONTAINING LITTLE OR NO RTG PRESENCE ON A GRADUAL BASIS FOR OVER TEN YEARS. MORE SOPHISTICATED THAI USE OF STATISTICAL AND INTELLIGENCE TOOLS IS NOW MORE CLEARLY DEFINING THE SCOPE AND DEPTH OF THE CPT THREAT. THE INSURGENCY HAS ALWAYS DEPENDED FOR GROWTH ON BEING LEFT ALONE. THE RTG CONTINUES TO LEAVE IT ALONE AND IN DOING SO IS FOSTERING THE GROWTH OF THE GREATEST THREAT TO ITS NATIONAL EXISTENCE FROM THE LONG-RANGE VIEW. IN THE ABSENCE OF A GREATER RTG EFFORT, IT CAN BE ANTICIPATED THAT THE EXPANDING GROWTH OF THE MOVEMENT WILL SHARPLY MANIFEST ITSELF IN  
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 04 BANGKO 20942 031045Z

THE FUTURE IN A HIGHER LEVEL OF VIOLENCE IN AFFECTED AREAS AS CPT MILITARY FORCES CONTINUE TO MOUNT LARGE-SCALE HIGH-INTENSITY ATTACKS AGAINST RTG INSTALLATIONS AND PERSONNEL.  
MASTERS

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